



OPEN LETTER TO THE MANCHESTER COMMUNITY REGARDING PARKS & REC CLOSURES

Yesterday, we announced the difficult decision to close or cancel many popular park facilities and programs for the summer. Understandably, this was met with disappointment and frustration by many.

We are all unhappy with the situation we find ourselves in and its impact on our choices. I would like to share with you the considerations that led to our decision, particularly with respect to the closure of swimming pools and the cancellation of our popular Fun in the Sun youth camp.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented us with both serious health concerns and significant financial challenges. Under Governor Sununu's current [Stay at Home 2.0](#) guidelines, we cannot at this time safely or practicably operate aquatic facilities or camp activities.

In addition, in recognition of the revenue shortfalls attributable to the economic downturn, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen has instituted a hiring freeze. This means we are currently unable to hire seasonal staff. Parks & Rec hires over 100 seasonal employees each year (including lifeguards, pool checkers, and camp counselors) to assist with operating Manchester's aquatic facilities and recreation programs. Without them, we cannot safely or effectively open the pools, splash pad or summer camps, all of which see several hundred visitors each day.

We are committed to keeping Manchester's parks open for fresh air and exercise as much as possible. Large spaces and trails are open, as are the Derryfield Country Club golf course and The Hollows Disc Golf complex. As circumstances and guidance around COVID-19 evolve, we will re-evaluate closures of tennis courts, basketball courts, playground equipment, the Derryfield Fit Lot, and Crystal Lake Beach. We will continue to consult with health professionals regarding the future use of our parks for organized sports and larger events.

Thank you for your understanding at this difficult time. We hope to see you at the parks, enjoying the summer safely and responsibly.

Mark Gomez
Chief of Parks, Recreation & Cemetery